

## **Coverage for FluMist® During the 2004-2005 Flu Season**

The United States is once again facing a severe flu vaccine shortage, with half of the nation's supply of flu shots now unavailable. In response, the DOD Health Benefit Plan (DODHBP) will begin to cover the nasal-spray Flu vaccine FluMist® under the preventive medicine benefit of the DODHBP during the 2004-2005 flu season under FDA-approved guidelines for healthy individuals ages 5 to 49.

We are taking this action to enable more members to be vaccinated against influenza. This also will allow the medical community and state and local public health officials to redirect limited supplies of the injectable influenza vaccine to those individuals in high-risk categories.

Coverage of the nasal-spray flu vaccine is an exception to the DOD NAF Health Benefit Plan's coverage policy. Once the 2004-2005 flu season is over, we expect to reinstate our current policy of covering only the injectable flu vaccine.